

Western State Hospital  
Staunton, Virginia  
*Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes*  
*Jeffrey's Building, Room 95 at 12:30*  
*June 23, 2014*

**Present:** Hal Meyers, Committee Chair, Kathy Belcher, Vice Chair, Heidi Campbell, Donna Gum, Rob Wade, Mahlon Webb, committee members; Chuck Collins, WSH/Regional Advocate; Mark Seymour, WSH Advocate; Erin Haw, dLCV Advocate; Becky Shaw, Liaison to WSH Director

**Absent:** Mark Schorsch, committee member

**Guests:** Mary Kiernan-Stern, Karen Cochran, newly appointed members

Mr. Meyers, Committee Chair, called the Local Human Rights Committee to order on June 23, 2014. The committee approved the minutes from the May 19<sup>th</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup> meetings as written. The May 19<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved with a motion by Ms. Belcher, a second by Ms. Campbell and a vote of the committee. Mr. Wade made a motion to approve the June 5<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ms. Gum seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by vote of the committee. Mr. Wade noted that a quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved with changes with a motion from Ms. Gum, a second by Ms. Campbell and a vote of the committee.

There were no patients or public guests in attendance during the public comment time.

The 2 Hickory Unit rules were presented by Dr. Jeff Phillips and Dr. Carol McLain. Ms. Belcher questioned the use of cellular phones on the unit. Newer cell phones have camera and video capabilities. Internet access is also common on newer model phones. The hospital makes every effort to eliminate the risk of HIPAA violations, including limiting access to personal cell phones. Patients are provided the opportunity to use the State's phone in a visitor or consultation room.

Mr. Seymour noted that lighting on the unit porches is insufficient for patients to be outside after dark. It has been noted that the reflection of the indoor lights on the windows limits staff visibility to the porch area. WSH's Physical Plant Services is currently working toward a solution for this problem.

A concern regarding locking bedroom doors was noted. The hospital, and subsequently, each unit, is working toward a resolution that will accommodate patient needs as well as encourage patients to leave their room during the day, preferably to attend PSR malls. As the hospital understands, it is the patient's right to refuse treatment; therefore, accommodations are made available in the form of quiet rooms where they may spend the day if they choose not to attend malls.

Moving to the new hospital has had a largely positive situation for the patients. There have been very few problems with room assignments, and many more areas / activities exist for free time. The primary negative comment from patients is that they miss being able to walk around the grounds. The hospital makes every attempt to provide patients with as much fresh air time as possible.

The announcement of a Code Purple (psychiatric emergency) does not always imply someone is going into the ERC (emergency restraint chair). There are multiple other options for

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assisting a patient in crisis. The new hospital's alarm system provides the opportunity for more staff to respond during emergencies.

Mr. Wade made a motion to approve the 2 Hickory Unit Rules with the recommended changes. Mr. Webb seconded the motion and the committee approved by vote. Dr. McLain indicated she will submit the modified version of the rules to the committee once changes are complete.

Dr. Jon Anderson and Dr. Herb Stewart presented the unit rules for 2 Oak for review. It was noted that these are procedural descriptions and explanations more so than rules. Ms. Belcher suggested the word "Ward" be changed to "Unit." Mr. Wade commented on the rules 2 Oak has for cellular phones with cameras. He indicated that he appreciates what the hospital is attempting to do to protect patient privacy.

Ms. Belcher further asked about the policy / procedure for locking patient bedroom doors. As with 2 Hickory, they want to implement this procedure but have not done so pending resolution of potential problems with the electronic locks.

Ms. Gum made a motion to approve the 2 Oak Unit Rules with changes. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion, and the committee approved by vote.

**Upon a motion made by Ms. Gum, the committee went into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3711, a.15 and §2.2-37.05.5 for the purpose of discussion of medical record / treatment plans.**

**Upon reconvening in open session, all members of the Local Human Rights Committee certified that to the best of each ones' knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempt from statutory open meeting requirements, and only public business matters identified in the motion to convene the closed session were discussed in closed session.**

Ms. Karen Cochran attended today's meeting as a potential new member. Ms. Cochran's son has intellectually disabilities (ID) with mental illness. In working towards obtaining the best possible treatment for her son, Ms. Cochran has dealt with various ID and mental health entities in and around Richmond as well as Staunton. She is a Registered Nurse, has served on the WSH LHRC, and VCSB in the past. She manages apartments for people who aren't established and need support. The committee voted by submitting their review forms to Mr. Meyers. Ms. Cochran was invited to join the WSH LHRC by unanimous vote.

In the Advocates' Report, Mr. Collins noted that the state Human Rights director, Ms. Margaret Walsh, is retiring effective July 24<sup>th</sup>. A replacement has not been named at this time. The new Commissioner of Behavioral Health, Debra Ferguson, has assumed the duties of her new position. It is clear, even at this early time, that Ms. Ferguson is very responsive in working with, and for, staff.

The census has increased in recent months, possibly due to new mental health legislation. WSH staffing levels are down despite extensive efforts to recruit additional direct care staff.

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Mr. Seymour noted that he has seen an increase recently in patients asking why they are here, as well as complaints specific to how being here affects their home life: Paying bills, maintaining a home, caring for pets, etc.

Regarding the Complaint Report, Mr. Wade asked Mr. Collins for clarification on number 343. The treatment team handled this situation very thoroughly. Ms. Gum questioned number 356. Dr. Walling offered to let the patient choose which lab technician she wanted and to provide her with 24 hours notice of upcoming lab draws. The committee commented on how well the report was written and asked that their appreciation be relayed to Ms. Burns regarding the quality of her work.

The only comment regarding the Extraordinary Barriers List was to change the word "Ward" to "Unit."

The Internal Forensic Privilege Committee (IFPC) minutes and the Clinical Risk Management Committee (CRMC) minutes were reviewed. It was suggested that "Ward" be changed to "Unit."

Ms. Gum has completed her tenure with the LHRC; however, she will continue to provide community information via email. Mr. Wade or Ms. Campbell will present Community Connections information to the committee. In legislative news, the Bed Registry was funded, more DAP funding has been approved, CCCA received funding for Security Officers, and additional funds may have been allocated for continued ICT. MHAA will participate in the VFW PTSD seminar panel. Shakin' will host MHAA on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The Augusta County Fair will host a community night in which MHAA will participate.

Mr. Meyers and Ms. Gum have completed 6 years of service on the WSH LHRC. In recognition of their service and dedication to the patients of Western State Hospital, they were each presented with a framed certificate of appreciation. Mr. Meyers and Ms. Gum have both served as Chairperson of the committee during their tenure and have made considerable contribution to the work of this committee. They both responded to the thoughtful comments of the committee, expressing their pleasure at having had the opportunity to participate in such important work and with such a committed team.

Nominations and elections for officers for Fiscal Year 2015 were held. The following is a summary of the results of these elections: Ms. Belcher, Secretary; Ms. Campbell, Vice Chair; and Mr. Wade, Chairman. Mr. Wade indicated his pleasure in having the opportunity to serve as the chairman to this committee of dedicated and talented individuals.

The next meeting will be held July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at 12:30 p.m. in Room A1085 of the Staff Development Offices.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

**APPROVED:**

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Rob Wade  
Chair

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Glenda D. Sheffer  
Secretary to WSH Liaison